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# A FEW WORDS AMONG MANY,

About the touchy point of

# SUCCESSION:

*Humbly Propoſed to Timely Conſideration againſt the Seſſion of Parliament; whether it be now, or hereafter.*

THE Caſe to be put is this. A Nation is Proteſtant in the main Body of it: He that is like to ſucceed in the Throne is a *Roman Catholick*. What ſhall be done in ſuch an Affair? The Caſe does belong to the Divines, and to the Lawyers, though it be the Parliament alone muſt determine it: Nay, the matter indeed is what every-body think themſelves engaged in, and every body ſpeak their minds of. There is no Coffee-houſe, and few private houſes, but their Table-talk is of theſe things. I ſee no reaſon therefore why I may not ſpeak my mind alſo, ſo long as I do it of my ſelf, and with this ſignification, that no others (how much ſoever elſe concern'd with me) have any hand in the publication of it. For I am perſwaded, that if the Parliament ſhall take the liberty (every one of them, as *Engliſh*-men and Proteſtants) to ſpeak the ſame things in the Houſe, as we do abroad, they would be leſs afraid of one ano-

ther, and more ſecure in their Counſels, (whatſoever they talk) in providing for the ſafety of the Kingdom, and Religion.

It is decreed in the Council of *Lateran*, That all Princes ſhall Exterminate the *Hereticks* out of their Dominions, upon pain of Depoſition, Excommunication, and Damnation. The *Papiſts* believe the Doctrines of their Church to be infallible, and what is decreed by a Pope and Univerſal Council is unqueſtionably received as a Doctrine of their Church; and conſequently if any thing be decreed to be done by any man, upon pain of Damnation, they muſt do it firſt or laſt, by ſuch means as they can, if they intend to be ſaved. Where a perſon then is a *Roman Catholick*, and true to his Religion, he cannot enter upon the Throne of a Proteſtant Kingdom, but he muſt reſolve to Exterminate his Subjects. To enter ſo, is to enter *Hoſtili animo*, with the mind of an Enemy, as *Hoſtis & Hoſtis Publicus*. But to be *Hoſtis* and *Rex*, a King and an Enemy; a Shepheard and Father of his People, and one that comes to make havock of them: To deſtroy, and to rule or govern; are things utterly incompatible.

The reſolution of this Caſe therefore in point of Reaſon and Conſcience is open. That ſuch a perſon muſt on neceſſity either renounce that Religion, or elſe he muſt relinquiſh the Government, and be content that the next rightful Heirs or Succeſſors do poſſeſs it.

Upon theſe terms now, if there be any perſon ſo *pious* and *devout* as not daring to hazard the Salvation of his Soul, he does purpoſe if he be King (whatſoever comes of it, ſeeing he muſt) to make his people

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turn *Papists*, or execute that Decree of the Church upon them; and if he be also so *generous* and *brave*, as that rather than do such a thing as to persecute his Country, and make the Nation miserable, he will freely decline a Crown to avoid that intollerable incumbent duty: What is there under the whole cope of Heaven so worthy to canonize a mans name to posterity as such an action? And what can be said why the Representative of a Nation might not make an humble and yet confident Address to such a one, to offer him Reasons for his voluntary condescension to such a Request made to him, when a forced deposition by an Act of Parliament, before any such tryal be attempted, may look exceeding hard, and also be ill taken? Neither were it a thing less elegible, as it must certainly be more happy, to remain a Duke and Father of the next Successor taking the Throne and reigning in quiet, than to be himself a King, and reign only in Blood, and with the Confusion of his Subjects.

And to render this matter yet more glorious and necessary to such a Royal person, he shall moreover by doing thus provide security for the sacred life of a Soveraign, and a Brother, which so long as a *Papist* is sure to succeed, must be still exposed to Plots and Treason, Poyson and Assassination: For there cannot be wanting a *Clement*, a *Ravilliack*, or some such *Villain*, as is capable to be perswaded, that by a feat so highly advantagious to their Religion, he shall both expiate the sin, and merit life eternal.

As for the Case in point of Law I undertake not; Only it appears to me (I must confess) from the Statute of the thirteenth of the Queen, that though this Government be Hereditary, it is so Hereditary as the

*Laws* or *Statutes* of Parliament do *bind the deſcent of the Crown.* And if it be as it appears, I have nothing elſe to ſay, but to deſire of God to give to thoſe who are now in expectation to be Aſſembled, the moderation and *underſtanding* of the *Heads* of the *Children* of *Iſſachar*, that they may *know* at ſuch a time as this *what* Iſrael *hath to do.*

And if there be no Act paſſed by them concerning theſe matters, I muſt for the diſcharge of my Conſcience ſuperadd thus much further, that although *on the part of the Soveraign* he that is a *Papiſt* cannot take the Throne where the Body of the people are Proteſtant, according to *right reaſon* and *Conſcience*, as might be made to appear further, if what is ſaid were not ſufficient already; yet *on the part of the Subject*, let the Crown fall to any perſon, whatſoever he be, whether *Papiſt* or *Proteſtant*, if he have right to it according to the *preſent Law* in force, and the *Conſtitution* of the Nation, there is no good Proteſtant, or no Subject that fears God, can riſe up in Arms againſt him upon the account of Religion. *Evangelium* (ſay our firſt Reformers) *non abolet politias.*

We are taught this by the *Primitive Chriſtians* all along during the Reign of the Heathen; who, whatſoever their number was, in their Cities, Caſtles, Armies (as ſome of the Fathers tell us) were ready to lay down their lives, and ſubmit to a Decimation upon a Decimation, rather than they would draw their Swords upon the Emperour, or ſin againſt Heaven. This we are taught more effectually by the Apoſtle, and are therefore never to be untaught it. *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordain'd of God. Whoſoever*

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*therefore reſiſteth the Power reſiſteth the Ordinance of God; and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation.* I ſpeak it (I muſt acknowledge) not only in regard to the prevention of Blood and Miſchief (if Providence ſhould call us under ſuch a Tryal) but in regard to the Parliament, that they may look the more about them, and conſider, they have a ſeaſon. And more particularly that they may beware of running into this Errour (upon which two Parliaments have ſplit already) the neglect of doing what *may* be done through an over-reaching haſte toward what they *would* have done (I mean in this point of Succeſſion) and which will be *better* done (if it be at all done) to be *laſt* done.

As for the Plot, I fear not likewiſe to ſay thus much, that whoſoever he be ſhall be found to have deſign'd the Introduction of *Popery* by the Murder of the King, or a Maſſacre of the People, I declare in the behalf of the publick, he ought to dye. Sir *Edmund-Bury Godfrey's* innocent Blood cryes for Juſtice on ſuch men: But if any perſon has had any hand in this Plot, no farther than to give his conſent and aſſiſtance to the bringing in that Religion upon us by an Univerſal Liberty of Conſcience, and no otherwiſe; which is conſequently by Teaching and Argument in a gentle progreſs of Time, and Perſwaſion, not by Violence and Blood, or any hurt to the Subject in their Lives and Eſtates, or by converſion of the Civil Government from Regal to Deſpotical, as by many is imagined; and, being now convinced of the deteſtable Villany and Hellish Devotion of others, who were precipitating the Deſign with *Regicide* and a *Common Slaughter*, ſhall be willing hereupon to make ſome remonſtrance for the purging himſelf and

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his Conscience, and the testifying his abhorrence of proceeding further in such an Enterprise: I must declare with the like open freedom, that such a one ought to be Heard. And who can tell what might be the issue of such a piece of Ingenuity as this only? To say, *Look you, Sirs, Thus it has been, I confess it, and thus: These are the Consequents; I see the evil, It shall be so no more.*

In the name of God, let us but have a Gentleman-like Repentance, that is *right English*, without reserve, and here is the way to the first, and consequently the best and most desireable reconcilement that can be in the Case; to the most easie coming off from what is past, and for the giving the most Heroical Satisfaction that can be given to the Land.

By this means shall such a person engage himself to the strongest retractation of all that is ill, for recovery of his trust with the Nation; and the Plot be so laid open, that the Parliament may proceed to the application of a perfect Remedy. By this means shall the *innocent* be put into safety, and the guilty (so far as any is guilty) into his right course of obtaining the forgiveness of his Country. For such is the nature of the *English* spirit, that when it generously prosecutes the obstinate Offender with vehemence and courage, as soon as he does but relent or comes to suffer, it is presently apt to commiseration, and to think the best of him.

I shall conclude with a Text of Scripture. If this great man shall neither come off from his way (which were to be first wished,) nor to a Compromise and Resignation (which were to be sought *next*); nor the Parliament to some Act for *Constraint*, to make him chuse the one or the other (which is to be *last* attempted);

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or for *Reſtraint*, by ordering the Militia and other things ſo as it ſhall be equivalent, or as politickly good for *England*, as if he did either: I ſhall deliver my own Soul as a Watchman, and as an *Engliſh*-man, proteſt before God that I can ſee the appearance of nothing but evil, that is, Deſtruction, Miſery, and Trouble, coming upon the three Kingdoms. *Now it came to paſs after this, that* Amaziah *brought the Gods of the Children of* Seir, *and ſet them up, and bowed before them. Wherefore Gods Anger was kindled, and he ſent to him a Prophet; and it came to paſs as the Prophet was talking with him, he ſaid, Art thou made of the Kings Council? Forbear, why ſhouldſt thou be ſmitten? Then the Prophet forbore, and ſaid, I know that God hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkened to my Counſel.*

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FINIS.

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*This Paragraph is to be ſupplied*, p. 4. *l.* 22.

My Reaſon for this deciſion is, becauſe the Prince himſelf knows what is in his own heart, whether he be bound in his Conſcience ſo far by his Religion, or not: and if he be, he muſt know alſo that this is inconſiſtent with the Rule over ſuch a People. Government is for the Weal of the Publick, and though the Publick might be ſerved by the rooting out Diſſenters where they are but a *few*, it cannot be ſerved by the doing ſo where they are *many*, and the *moſt* are ſuch. On the contrary, the People know not the Princes heart; he may be a Papiſt otherwiſe, and not of that Conſcience; he may receive the Doctrines of *Trent*, and renounce the Decree of *Lateran*; or he may interpret it, that it binds not, when it *cannot* be executed, as where the *greater* number are Proteſtants, and when in prudence it *ought not*, as where there are but *many* ſo. So long then as the Subject judges only of what is *open*, the Princes *Title*, and not of what is *ſecret*, the Princes *Heart*, the Prince may be bound in Conſcience to *lay down*, and yet the Subject have no Warrant (if he will not) to *reſiſt*. Whether the Prince (I ſay) be *Hoſtis* in regard to his Opinion, it is God alone and himſelf know: Whether he be *Heres*, the rightful Prince or not, all know. The *Prince* is bound to go by his Conſcience, the People are bound to go by theirs in the Determination.

*This is a Paragraph at laſt.*

If ever thoſe that fear God, and ſeek the good of their Country, had need of moderation, they now need it; for no violent thing can hold, whatſoever any think or ſhall act to the contrary. The Author.

*FINIS.*

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